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AUTHOR Boduch, Judy; Pravdica, Suzette
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ABSTRACT

A three-year program to bring together third-grade students in a self-contained bilingual classroom and a mainstream classroom is described. The project was designed to reduce the isolation of the bilingual students and prejudice toward them shown by mainstream students. During the first year, gym and music classes were combined, students were teamed in pairs or trios for science and social studies, and combined classes viewed and discussed curriculum-related films weekly. In the second year, combined gym and music classes were continued, adjacent classrooms were used, students from each class were paired for weekly lessons, new teacher training was undertaken, students wrote individual logs and paired to create a publication in English and Spanish. In the third year, these principles and additional lessons learned from experience about grouping students were implemented. As a result, students are getting along better, sharing work equally and working well together, and playing together during recess, and establishing friendships. It is concluded that the program also facilitates mainstreaming. (MSE)

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MUTUALLY BENEFCIAL TEAMWORK BETWEEN BILINGUAL AND MAINSTREAM CLASSES

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Judy Boduch
623 N. Clark Dr.
Palatine, IL 60067
(708)934-6299 (p.m.)

Virginia Lake School
District 15
934-2850 (day)

Suzette Pravdica
700 Deer Run Dr.
Palatine, IL 60067
(708) 705-8843 (p.m.)

Virginia Lake School
District 15
934-2850 (day)

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Mutually Beneficial Teamwork Between Bilingual and Mainstream Classes

By: Judy Boduch and Suzette Pravdica

Abstract

This paper shows the results of a three year plan that was implemented between a third grade bilingual teacher and a third grade mainstream teacher, and their classes. The plan was originally conceived because of the isolation of the bilingual class and the prejudice shown by the mainstream children. The teachers began by planning their units of instruction together. Then they went on to integrate their classes on a regular basis. The next step was to team the children up into cooperative pairs or trios to do lessons that were content-based and language-rich. The benefits of this type of instruction are discussed, as well as ideas for implementation across grade levels.

Mutually Beneficial Teamwork Between Bilingual and Mainstream Classes

By Judy Boduch and Suzette Pravdica

This program was developed three years ago by two third grade teachers at Virginia Lake School in Palatine, Illinois. One teacher has a self-contained bilingual class and the other has a mainstream monolingual English class. Their goal at this time was to integrate bilingual and mainstream classes to resolve social problems and to facilitate the learning of English of the second-language students.

The decision to team teach and develop a "Buddy" system between the third grade classes was a teacher decision. This was not an administrative choice. This is one of the reasons why this program has been very successful for the past three years.

Previously, the bilingual children had very little contact with the mainstream classes. Part of this isolation was due to the fact that the bilingual classroom was a portable classroom located outside the school building. During recess, no interactions occurred voluntarily among the bilingual children and the other third grade classes. Even though no integration was taking place, team planning was already established among the teachers so that the same

content was being taught in all third grade classes simultaneously.

Before the teaming occurred, the teachers observed a great deal of prejudice between the children. Students in the mainstream class were saying, "those Mexican kids" when recess problems occurred. Such negative comments and name-calling occasionally led to physical fighting on the playground.

During the first year of teaming, gym and music classes were combined. One-half of each class went to gym and the other half of each class went to music during the same block of time. In the spring of the previous year, priority scheduling was given to these classes by the gym and music teachers. This same schedule has been continued for all three years.

Another integration method that was introduced during the first year was "Primary Pals." The four third grade teachers would plan together for third grade science and social studies units. The students were integrated by each teacher forming his/her class into four heterogeneous groups. Each group was given a color name (red, blue, green, yellow.) Each teacher developed one hands-on, in-depth lesson on an important concept of the science or social studies unit. Then they used a rotating schedule so each color group participated in one lesson from each teacher once or twice a week. A sharing session followed the lessons when the students returned to their homeroom

classroom so that content could be reviewed and translated as necessary.

Primary Pals Schedule

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Teacher A	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
Teacher B	Blue	Red	Yellow	Green
Teacher C	Green	Blue	Red	Yellow
Teacher D	Yellow	Green	Blue	Red

In addition, the bilingual and mainstream classes viewed films together on a weekly basis related to themes of study. This allowed for open discussions and participation from all students. Some of the monolingual Spanish-speaking students had their questions and/or comments translated by the teacher. Meanwhile, the mainstream class proved to be good role-models for students learning English.

During the second year of implementation, combined gym and music classes continued. Also, adjacent classrooms were provided for the bilingual and mainstream teachers that were teaming. This new physical arrangement was conducive to the start of the "Buddy" activities. One student from each class formed a cooperative pair (Johnson and Johnson, 1986). This was the first year that newspapers were introduced to supplement the curriculum. Through the Newspapers in Education Program (West, 1993), sponsors paid for individual copies of the newspaper for each child once a week. Furthermore, science and social studies units

provided the basis for other weekly "Buddy" lessons. Occasionally, the main idea of the "Buddy" lesson was explained in Spanish beforehand on an as-needed basis.

The teachers used their planning time during the students' gym and music classes to formulate their teamwork or "Buddy" lessons, making sure they were content-based and language-rich.

Also during the second year of implementation, one of the teachers began taking "Teaching the Teacher Within" classes developed and taught by Christine Ewy (Ewy, 1993). The two teachers then incorporated some of the major concepts into their "Buddy" lessons, for example, student empowerment and students as teachers of themselves and their peers.

Thinking Log reflection sheets (Fogarty and Haack, 1986) were given to the students every other month. This was an opportunity for the students to share their feelings about how their cooperative group was working. The students were very honest and open in stating their perceptions and elaborating on the positive or negative feelings they had about working with their buddy. After reading the Thinking Logs at mid-year, the teachers decided to change the partners for the remainder of the year to give the students an opportunity to become acquainted with a new friend. Also, at the end of the year, the children were given the opportunity to write a bilingual book with their buddy. Working in pairs, they wrote a creative story together in

English. Then the bilingual student translated the story into Spanish. After revising, the students printed their final copies in the computer lab. Then they added the illustrations and copies were made for each student involved in the book, and each teacher.

The third year of the beneficial teamwork led to both teachers taking the "Teaching the Teacher Within" classes to learn more about how students are led from peer-tutoring to equally-contributing working teams. This year, the teachers used their prior knowledge in grouping the students. They waited two weeks into the school year to get to know their classes and to choose their buddies or teams. (Some children formed a trio due to a larger bilingual class.) As often as possible, boys are matched with boys and girls are matched with girls. To achieve well-matched pairs, a quiet child was placed with a more verbal child. Good role-models were teamed with disruptive children. New non-English speaking students were paired with a bilingual Spanish-speaking student in the mainstream class or in a trio with a bilingual classmate and an English-speaking buddy.

The results of the manner in which the children were paired during the current year are as follows:

a. Students are getting along better than in previous years.

b. They are sharing the work equally and working well together.

Also, gym and music classes are still integrated. "Primary Pals" are still used for science and social studies units, and "Buddy" lessons occur once a week. Math was added this year as another content area explored through pairs or trios. Newspaper lessons and films are continued as well.

Planning for the "Buddy" lessons continues on a weekly basis during the children's combined gym and music times. The teachers are also part of a third/fourth grade level team due to multi-age classes. This entire team plans "Primary Pals" lessons in science and social studies units on a monthly basis.

As a result of the three years of mutually beneficial teamwork, the teachers have observed:

1. During recess periods, all children are playing together voluntarily and their organized games (i.e. soccer, football, etc.) are planned together.

2. There have been no signs of prejudice exhibited this year.

3. Children know each other as individuals and have become friends instead of mere acquaintances.

4. This program facilitates mainstreaming. The bilingual students really know the mainstream teacher before transitioning for classes and eventually exiting from the bilingual program. It is also advantageous for the mainstream teacher to have an opportunity to know the

students on an individual basis before they are mainstreamed.

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